

SECRET

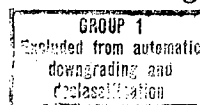
DECLASSIFIED AND RELEASED BY
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
SOURCES/METHODS EXEMPTION 3828
NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT
DATE 2007

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Contact with Virginia BENNETT on 11 May 1965

1. Virginia was first contacted at her home by me by telephone at 8 a.m. on 4 May 1965. Several previous telephone calls to her home during various hours of the day and evening brought no response until the evening of 3 May when her mother answered and said Virginia could be reached at home about 8 in the morning. I told Virginia that I represented an agency of the U. S. Government, that her name had come to my attention in connection with a matter of interest to me and that I would like to talk to her sometime in the near future at her convenience. She asked me to identify the agency with which I was connected and the information about her of interest to me. I told her I would identify the agency when we met but I could not do so over the telephone, and that I was interested in talking to her about her studies in France and her travels in Eastern Europe. Virginia said she was very busy working on some school papers at the present time and that her mornings and early evenings were taken up on a baby sitting job, but that if I could meet her in New York sometime when she planned to be there to visit the public library she could see me for a couple of hours. A tentative meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, 11 May. I telephoned her in the evening of 10 May to confirm the engagement and to set a time and place for the meeting. We met as scheduled at 1:30 p.m. in front of the Stage Coach restaurant in the Port Authority Bus Terminal on 8th Avenue and 40th Street, from where we took a taxi to the Sun Luck West restaurant on West 49th Street. Virginia was somewhat apprehensive and quiet when we started out in the taxi so I showed her my CIA ☐ ☐ credentials which seemed immediately to set her at ease.

2. Most of our conversation took place over lunch. Rather than probe for details I just let Virginia talk about her various experiences in the Soviet Union (with just an occasional question from me) to get an idea how much she encountered which would be of interest. There was only about a half hour left to continue our meeting in my hotel room after lunch. Virginia signed a Secrecy Agreement after "confessing" to me that she had in fact already probably revealed CIA's interest in her when she telephoned the FBI the day following my first telephone call to ask their opinion about whether she should keep her engagement with me. The Bureau officer told her he saw no harm in her meeting me at the place scheduled for our contact but that he did not think I would be CIA. CIA never offers to pay for anyone's travel to Washington, which I had offered to do if Virginia could



15 June 65

SECRET

-2-

meet me in Washington.

3. Virginia studied in Paris from 1962 to 1964 at the Ecole National des Langues Orientales Vivantes, where she minored in Ukrainian under the tutelage of Professor A. ZHUKOVSKY. From Paris she travelled to the Soviet Union (the first time in July 1963 and again in the summer of 1964) with the group Culture et Amitie, Jeunesse et Voyage Foyer des Deux Ours, which she described as a club for students of Russian organized by two French priests of the Byzantine Rite. She said the director of the club was Pere Paul CHAILLIET who was assisted by a younger priest, Pere Bernard DEPIRE - I now find this is AEVOYAGE/1 - who took the tours in to the Soviet Union. Virginia said Father DEPIRE was very strict about the conduct of the members of his tour groups and about anything political or propagandistic which they tried to carry in to the Soviet Union and would send home anyone found violating this rule.

4. During the first tour when the group visiting in Kiev Virginia met, quite by accident, and became friends with the wife of Ivan DRACH with whom she still corresponds and exchanges gift parcels. Virginia visited the Ivano Frankivsk University and asked one of the administrators if she could be shown around. He said he was sorry but they were too busy to show anyone around, that a tourist group had just been there the previous day and that everyone was just too busy to be bothered. Virginia put on a big act about her great disappointment that she, a disabled individual came all the way to the Ukraine by bus because she wanted to visit the university and the library and the administrator finally consented to try to accommodate her. He telephoned the Komsomol office and in a short time a young woman appeared to escort Virginia around the university and the city. The woman was Maria NEE LUTSYSHEN, about 21 years of age, the wife of Ivan DRACH. Virginia described Maria as attractive and very fashion conscious. She must have been ashamed to be seen on the streets with Virginia who had brought along comfortable floppy shoes, too long peasant skirts and combed her hair into a waist-long braid, because when she took Virginia home to dinner that evening, she fashioned her hair into a French twist and gave her one of her best dresses not only to wear but to keep, a dress she had just finished sewing for herself which happened to fit Virginia well. Virginia still has the dress. She said she repaid Maria by leaving her nylons and many other things. At first Maria began conducting the tour of Lvov as a patriotic Komsomol member would be expected to, reciting the Party line and pointing out the great Communist achievements. As Virginia began to reveal her knowledge about Soviet Ukrainian writers and her interest in Ukrainian literature and history, Maria began to reveal her true self. According to

SECRET

-3-

Maria, she was born in the Western Ukraine. Her mother, whom Virginia met in Lvov, is a Pole and a Catholic. Virginia gave her a pair of rosary beads when they met, which pleased her. Maria's father is a Ukrainian, a formen in a candy factory. Maria and Ivan DRACH had a baby born to them September 20, 1964, a son whom they named Maksym after the recently deceased Maksym RYL'SKY.

5. At Virginia's request Maria took her to see the graves of Ivan Franko and the Ukrainian opera star, KRUSHEL'NYTSKA. Maria then invited Virginia to her home for supper. They were together from 3 to 11 p.m. Maria gave Virginia her address and asked her to write to her from places she would visit in the Soviet Union and from France. Virginia did not give Maria her address because she was not sure just where she was going to be when she returned to Paris. She did send several postal cards to Maria from Moscow, from Georgia and from Italy. At Christmas time she sent greetings to Maria and in return received some pamphlets, poetry and books. Maria had given Virginia 4 copies of DRACH's Sonyachnyk, 2 copies of which Virginia gave to Professor ZHUKOVSKY and 1 copy to HAJVAS. She kept the one copy which was autographed by DRACH for herself. Before Virginia's departure from Paris in 1964, ZHUKOVSKY gave Virginia a copy of Ivan KOSHELIVETS' book Suchasna Literatur (paper back). He told her this would be a good book to get to the Soviet Ukrainian writers but he did not, however, ask her to take it with her. She decided to try to carry it in, cut it down to fit the hollow of her wooden leg and in this way carried it in to the Soviet Union on her second visit in 1964. She gave it to Maria for DRACH. Maria said DRACH was unhappy with the fact that KOSHELIVETS criticized MALYSHKO because MALYSHKO had suffered a great deal and was deserving of better treatment. KOROTYCH, on the other hand, received too much praise. According to DRACH, KOROTYCH is not that talented. Maria commented that KOROTYCH had sold himself to the enemies of DRACH and his circle. Her exact words were "vin prodavsha." Maria gave Virginia a copy of a poem by VINHRANOVSKY which Virginia said she carried in a blouse pocket while in the Soviet Union and on her way back to France. For some reason she could not explain, Virginia carried this same poem back on her second trip. Becoming concerned as a result of the changed atmosphere since her first visit (people seemed more cautious) Virginia hid the poem in a plastic bottle in which she was carrying powdered detergent for her personal laundry and thus brought it back out to France..

6. Maksym RYL'SKY died when Virginia was in Kiev. She accompanied Maria DRACH to the viewing of the body. Virginia said she felt sure DRACH was present when she was there but that Maria never introduced her to him and she never did get to

SECRET

-4-

meet him. For some reason DRACH was always conveniently away when she visited with Maria. Maria always spoke ~~to~~ of her husband as "DRACH". Virginia got the impression he enjoys great respect among his associates. She met Evhen HUTSALO and a fnu MAKAROV but no Russian writers. Maria asked Virginia to tell Prof. ZHUKOVSKY that Ivan DZIUBA's writings were being published again (See article in No. 7 issue of DNIPRO) under the name of ANDRUSCHENKO. This was confided to Virginia in great secrecy. She was told there were only 5 other individuals who knew ANDRUSCHENKO's true identity.

7. Maria told Virginia they had to be careful when they talked because there were people who constantly patrolled the streets with microphones which pick up conversations from as far away as 100 meters. She told Virginia, however, not to worry about her being seen with Virginia or receiving letters from her because "I have influential friends." She told about having some difficulty getting into the University of Kiev where she is a math student until her friends helped. Virginia wanted to meet Lena KOSTENKO and was given her telephone number at the offices of Literaturna Ukraina but KOSTENKO was not in when Virginia tried to reach her.

8. HAJVAS knows that Virginia corresponds with Maria. Virginia was put in contact with HAJVAS by ZHUKOVSKY. The former has helped her gather material for a term paper she is writing on M. KHVYL'OVYY, a purged Ukrainian writer of the 30's Maria DRACH also occasionally writes to ZHUKOVSKY. Maria and Virginia exchange correspondence and Virginia said she personally is very careful to keep the slightest hint of politics or propaganda out of her letters and not to write too frequently. Maria has sent her books and things and Virginia has mailed a couple of parcels to Maria with books and magazines requested and with gifts for the baby.

9. Virginia said she became interested in the Ukrainian language and Ukrainians while she attended Manhattanville College (1958-1961) where she had several acquaintances of Ukrainian birth. She decided to study the language when she went to school in Paris and through Professor ZHUKOVSKY has become acquainted with Ukrainian literature. She has continued her contact with the language via Ukrainian-language publications and books some of which she receives from HAJVAS. Virginia said HAJVAS and ZHUKOVSKY maintain secret the fact she and ZHUKOVSKY are in correspondence with Maria DRACH and anything else they might know about the Ukrainian writers. (A/2 knew about ZHUKOVSKY's contact with the DRACH's but knew nothing about Virginia until Roxanne was told by Mrs. DRACH that a Virginia BENNETT was given some material to carry out to the West.

SECRET

10. Virginia was already late for her appointment with Yuri LAVRYNENKO to whom she was going to be introduced by HAJVAS at the New York Public Library, so we terminated our meeting. (LAVRYNENKO was to help Virginia with some material for her paper on KHVYLOVYY.) I told Virginia I would like to be in touch with her again to get all the details about her two trips to the Soviet Union and about all the people she met there. She said she would not be free to meet me until after the first of June. As for her future plans, Virginia intends to spend the next year preparing for her PhD and would then like to work in Government, preferably as an interpreter with groups of Soviet tourists. She said she is fluent in Russian and French and has a good to fair knowledge of Ukrainian, Serbo-Croatian, Slovak, Italian and Spanish.

11. Personal Description: Virginia is 26 years of age. She is about 5' 6", a natural blond, fair complexioned. Virginia walks with a light limp as a result of a wooden leg which she wears. She was born with only one leg and I noticed that two fingers on one hand and one on the other are shorter and end in stumps. Virginia smiles frequently and talks animatedly. She is not shy as a result of what might appear to be a handicap. She volunteered the information about smuggling KOSHELIVETS' book to the Soviet Union inside her leg, telling about it in a rather humorous way. She also told about being approached by Soviet war casualties who admired her beautiful leg, wanting to know where similar ones could be obtained.

It is my opinion that Virginia is a good candidate to keep in mind for use in working with Soviet tour groups. I plan to contact her again to debrief her in greater detail about her experiences in the Soviet Union.

[SR/CA]